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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/613,291	07/02/2003	Steven M. Akkala	009801-0004	6705

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QUARLES & BRADY LLP
411 E. WISCONSIN AVENUE
SUITE 2040
MILWAUKEE, WI 53202-4497

EXAMINER

NGUYEN, CHI Q

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3635

DATE MAILED: 03/29/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/613,291

Applicant(s)

AKKALA ET AL.

Examiner

Chi Q. Nguyen

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 03 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 06 January 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-25 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 15-25 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-14 and 26-29 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 02 July 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☒ Other: attachedment.

DETAILED ACTION

This Office action is in response to the applicant's amendment filed on 1/6/2006.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-14 and 26-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Smith (US 4,534,132) in view of Rohling et al. (US 4,840,171).

In regard claims 1-3, 8, 9, and 26-28, Smith teaches pit and floor openings comprising a frame 91, a lid 44 (fig.4) having an underside and a topside, the lid rotatably attached to the frame for moving between closed and open positions, and at least one spring 73A including a coil portion connected to the spring support or the spring receptor, the spring including a clip arm 81A and inherently included a spring arm on the other end of the spring, wherein the clip arm is attached to the lid; wherein the spring biases the lid toward the open position (figure 4). However Smith does not teach specifically a spring receptor connected to the underside of the lid and the coil portion moves with the lid away from the frame when the lid is in the open position and at least two or three rings attached to the underside of the lid and aligned to slideably receive the spring support. Rohling teaches a unit having frame member 2, a cover or lid 13 including spring attached to the lid 13 onto spring receptor 14. The spring comprising a coil portion, spring arm, clip arm, and at least two/three rings R (see attached figure 1)

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attached figure 1) attached to the underside of the lid and aligned to slideably receive the spring support and wherein the coil portion is moved with the lid away from the frame 2 when the lid in the open position (see figure 1). At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person having an ordinary skill in the art to combine Smith with Rohling for the spring attached to the lid. The motivation for doing so would have been to maximize a clearance for an entrance or opening.

In regard claims 4, 11, Smith teaches the structural elements for the claimed invention as stated wherein there is at least one rib 110 attached to the underside of the lid and having an aperture 112 therein to receive the clip arm 81A (figure 4).

In regard claims 5, 12, Smith teaches the structural elements for the claimed invention as stated wherein a lug 95 extends inwardly from the frame.

In regard claims 6, 13, and 29 Smith teaches the structural elements for the claimed invention as stated wherein further including a safety arm 115 that is attached to the hatch, and movable from a storage position to a locking position (figure 4).

In regard claims 7, 14, Smith teaches the structural elements for the claimed invention as stated wherein further including a latch 67 connected to the underside of the lid (figure 2).

In regard claim 10, Smith teaches the claimed invention as stated wherein the spring receptor or spring support 84 extends from a rib 110 attached to the underside of the lid (figure 4).

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-14 and 26-29 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communication from the examiner should be directed to Chi Q. Nguyen whose telephone number is (571) 272-6847, Mon-Thu (7:00-5:30), Fridays off or examiner's supervisor, Carl Friedman can be reached at (571) 272-6842. The examiner's right fax number is (571) 273-6847.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status

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information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pairedirect.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at (866) 217-9197.

3/17/2006

on

CQN



Carl D. Friedman
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Group 3600

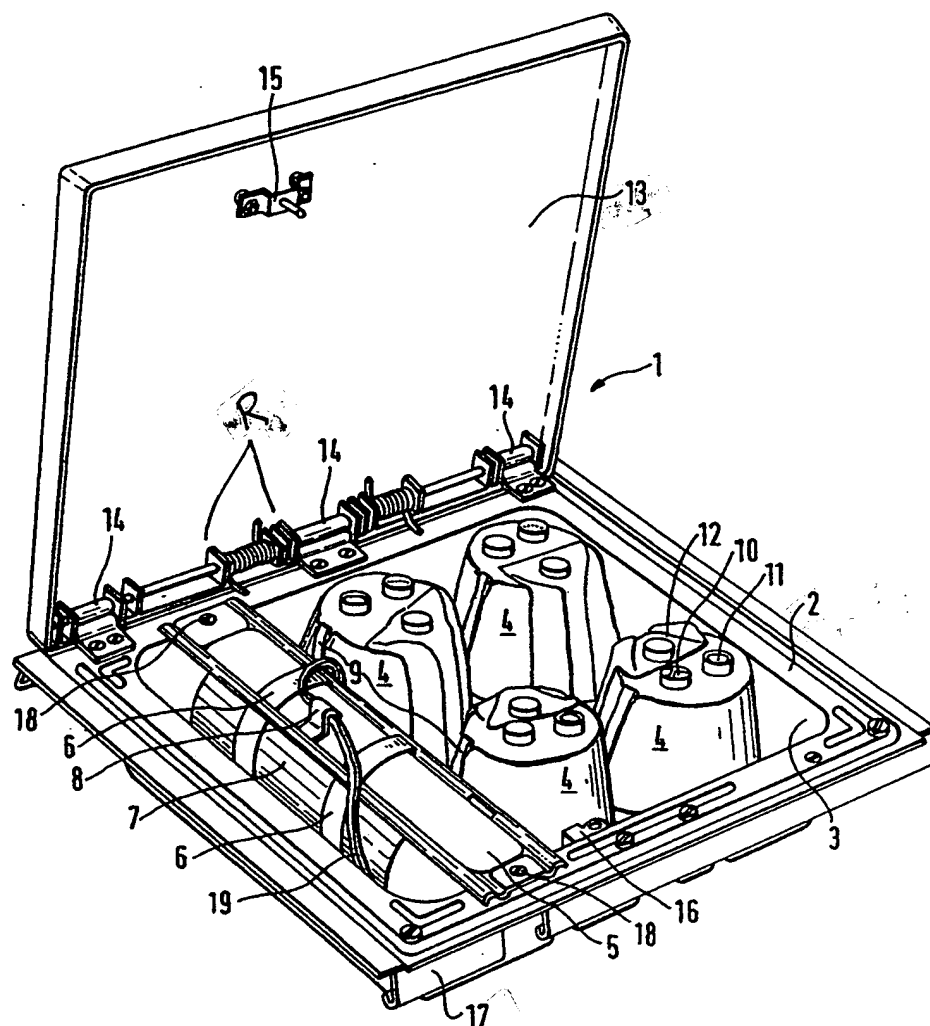


Fig. 1